

**PHILIP MORRIS U.S.A.**

**INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE**  
**120 PARK AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10017**

TO: Jose Fontanez

DATE: December 21, 1994

FROM Mary Jo Gennaro *MJG*

SUBJECT: Marlboro Country Nights Dance Showdown '94 Wrap-Up Report

Overview:

The Marlboro Country Nights Dance Showdown '94 program was presented in 114 country western bars throughout the U.S. from June - December 1994. The program centered around a 3 phase dance competition which was conducted with local competitions leading to regional and national winners. This program was designed to capitalize on the current country dance trend among young adult males/females and to extend Marlboro imagery in smoker friendly environments.

The Marlboro Country Nights Dance Showdown was the largest dance competition held offering over \$150,00 in prize money. During the 5 week local competitions, POS materials (banners, posters, table tents, entry forms and bar materials) were placed in the clubs. Name generation activities were conducted on the competition night each week and at all regional and national finals events.

Attendance & Demographics:

Consumer attendance at the clubs during the local competitions varied based on the day of the week the event was held. The clubs that held the local competition on traditionally slow nights hoping to use the event to draw patrons had disappointing attendance. The clubs that held their competition closer to or on the weekends reached 75 - 95% capacity. In some cases the club chosen for a market was not always the "hottest" club which also resulted in lower attendance. This was due to a lack of lead time to schedule the dance competition on the "top" clubs promotional calendar. In 80% of the clubs chosen the patron base met the Marlboro demographic proving to us that we have chosen the correct club environment.

2041890727

We did find that all of the local finals as well as the regional and national finals drew large audiences. These events were newsworthy and generated excitement in the market which resulted in big crowds.

Next year, we recommend closer research in to the clubs and markets chosen for the competition in addition to a Spring/Fall timetable. Since the summer months are traditionally slower in any club/market due to beach and vacation activities, we should avoid this time period.

#### Name Generation:

The name generation results were disappointing with 18,100 names collected. Since our budget was limited, name generation activities only took place on the evenings of the dance competition and, as stated above, the attendance was varied. We were unable to take advantage of the club's busiest nights.

In 1995, our budget will allow us to increase the number of days we conduct name generation activities to coincide not only with the competition but with the busiest nights at the club (mainly weekends).

#### Marlboro Visibility:

All participating clubs were very diligent in placing all promotional materials. Banners were hung and bar materials used throughout the five week local competition. Club staff wore Marlboro t-shirts and hats on competition nights. Due to delays in a decision on t-shirt artwork, the Country Nights t-shirt was not available until late in the program but were well-received when they were distributed. The design for the local, regional and national poster and the table tents turned out to be too dark for the club atmosphere to be as effective as we would have liked.

Next year, in addition to the banners, we should produce Marlboro Country Nights neons or lighted message boards as a leave behind in the bars. We should also take advantage of any "special" bar materials produced for other Marlboro programs. Also, Leo Burnett should submit a new "brighter" design for the posters so that they will stand out in the clubs.

#### Contestants:

Although changes in the contestant eligibility rules were made within the first 3 weeks of the program to include a broader spectrum of consumers, we

2041890728

still had a lower than expected number of contestants who entered the contest. The participating clubs told us that they normally have a 3-6 month window of promotion for this type competition. Due to our late approval of the program and our delay in production of the promotional materials, the West Coast clubs only had 2-4 weeks to promote, so the consumer/contestant awareness was low. We were still faced with the same problem in the other four regions when our promoter was unable to confirm clubs in enough time to properly promote the competition. Another factor was fitting the competition to our timetable and not being able to work more closely with the club's calendar. This resulted in some cases in more than one dance contest being held at the club in a relatively short period.

Another issue was the complexity of the dance requirements. Most competitions are based solely on either the two-step or a line dance. We had 3 required dances, two-step, swing and tush-push. These requirements along with a grand prize of \$10,000 contributed to the lower contestant entries.

The second year of Marlboro Country Nights Dance Showdown will automatically result in better consumer awareness since we have established the program in the marketplace. For 1995, we would recommend a timetable that would allow the clubs the optimum promotion period for consumer awareness and allow ourselves adequate production time for all materials. We will also review the requirements and structure of the competition to make it more "consumer/contestant friendly".

#### Celebrity Hosts/Regional Finals:

The use of Jesse Hunter and Chely Wright, two "up and coming" country artists to host our regional events was very well received by the clubs and consumers. We were able to use their names on the regional posters which helped to draw large audiences to the regional finals in every market. Their presence made all the regional finals a newsworthy and a more exciting event for consumers.

In 1995, I believe we need one higher caliber artist to host the regional finals and become a spokesperson for the program.

#### P. R. Efforts

The initial year of the program generated strong publicity results in markets across the nation. While there are always awareness challenges to be

2041890729

overcome with a first year program, publicity support for the Marlboro Country Nights Dance Showdown increased as the event moved from region to region. The press kit for this program provided information that explained the emerging trends in country dancing and a glossary on country dancing terms in addition to event specific information. This "educational" approach was well received by the media. Based on newspaper clips received as of December 14, 1994 we have generated 183 placements totaling 46.7 million impressions ( this count does not include the majority of clips from the Southwest Region and the National Finals). Additionally, throughout the course of the program, we responded to requests for interviews from electronic media who were interested in the event.

2041890730